

ELKES Dove Tales

News from Elkes Biscuits

June 1997

PROJECT
SPECIAL

£11.5 million project set to boost efficiency

Simply the best!

FORGET the significance of the millennium for a moment ...

1998 will long be remembered as a landmark in the history of Elkes Biscuits.

For next year will see the completion of PROJECT 98, an £11.5 million programme which will transform part of the company's Uttoxeter manufacturing site.

INCREASE

In short, the project will increase Elkes' capacity to produce cream biscuits and variety packs for customers both in the UK and overseas.

It centres on the creation of a new Creams Department in the building which used to hold finished goods.

ADVANCED

Here the company is to construct three floors to house new equipment which it believes is among the most advanced in the world.

“Our aim is to become the biggest and most cost-effective producer of variety packs in the UK”



Managing Director Stuart Kennedy (left) holds a PROJECT 98 meeting with Les Alderson, David Cullum, Graham Halton, Jonathan Zair and Barry Gallimore

This major investment programme will bring automation to every stage of the manufac-

turing process, from ingredients handling to packing and overwrapping.

“Our aim is to become the most effective supplier of creams – as well as the biggest and most cost-effective producer of variety packs – in the UK,” commented Managing Director Stuart Kennedy.

OVERLEAF: The countdown begins on PROJECT 98

Starting the countdown on PROJECT 98

■ Creams

Preparatory construction work has already begun in the mixing area, which is to feed new Creaming Line Zero. This involves raising the roof and building a mezzanine floor to carry the dough mixer – in the same way that Farley's Rusks mixing was accommodated when production transferred from Plymouth to Uttoxeter seven years ago.

Line Zero replaces existing Creaming Lines 1/15 and 5/11 and is at the heart of Elkes' plans for creaming variety pack components. It's being called Line Zero because it runs on the other side of Line 1 from Line 2 where an oven bay is being constructed in an area previously occupied by Crumb and other equipment which is to move.

The dough mixer will feed a new three-zone APV Baker oven, 40.4 metres long and 1200 mm wide, capable of baking Custard Cream shells at 160 rows per minute.

Work starts in July on building the two extra floors in the new Creams Department, with the old finished goods high bay warehouse area sectioned off from the Factory Despatch area. When the floors are completed in late 1997, the

installation of all the new cream mixing and sandwiching equipment for Line Zero will start on the new first and second floors.

Mondo cream mixing will feed a new specially uprated and improved APV wide creaming machine. One of the features of this machine is that it will include a special clean-in-place system so that cream changeover times can be minimised.

After cooling, the cream biscuits will transfer into a Sapastock Accumulator. This takes them down to the ground floor and delivers them directly to two new high speed wrapping machines which will flow wrap the biscuits as either 150g or 200g packets. If the packets are for Overwrapping, they will then be automatically packed into crates, saving the cardboard cases currently used.

Not surprisingly, considering its sheer size, PROJECT 98 will be carried out in several phases over the coming 18 months. In outline, here is how it is scheduled to happen.

■ Overwrapping

Work is also to start this July on the Overwrapping building. Here a new first floor will eventually accommodate a high speed wrapping layout (including automatic crate packing) where packets of Nice, Shortcake and Digestive will be overwrapped. The ground floor will become a purpose-built room for Overwrapping.

While the building work takes place, the Overwrapping team will transfer to the storage building next to the company shop for about four months.

In the new Overwrapping operation, two automatic crate unloaders will feed a new SIG HBM wrapping machine with a throughput of up to 100 variety packs per minute. The wrapping machine will employ a vacuum system and end seal tuckers, so that the packs themselves are neat and the case packing operation which follows is efficient.

Finally, PROJECT 98 also includes the installation of a new high capacity Tray Wash machine which will be housed in a specially constructed room in the A Shed area.

The shape of things to come: the new-look Creams Department in Elkes Biscuits' Uttoxeter factory

